

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-22 are presently active, Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, and 21 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 5, 6, 13, and 14 were objected to due to informalities. Claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ishii (U.S. Pat. No. 5,529,657). Claims 3, 4, 13, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishii. Claims 8, 9, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishii in view of Park et al (U.S. Pat. Application Publ. No. 2003/0000648 A1). Claims 5, 7, 10, 15, 18, 19, and 20 were objected to for being dependent from a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 21 and 22 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection.

Firstly, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 5, 7, 10, 15, 18, 19, and 20 and in Claims 21 and 22. As discussed below, Claim 21 has been rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection. Thus, independent Claim 21 and Claim 22 dependent from Claim 21 are now believed to be in a condition for allowance.

Secondly, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the courtesy of Examiner Paschall to conduct an interview in this case on August 19, 2004. During the interview, the issues identified in the outstanding Office Action were discussed as substantially summarized below. Specifically, changes to Claims 6, 7, 13, and 14 to overcome the claim objection and

changes to Claim 21 to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection were discussed and agreed to. Moreover, during the interview, changes to Claim 1 were discussed to clarify that the minor side of the focus ring has a smaller radial width extending in a plane substantially transverse to the longitudinal axis of the plasma chamber than the major side. Examiner Paschall understood the distinction and agreed that this clarification would overcome the applied prior art. No decision on patentability was reached pending further search and consideration.

Given the understanding reached during the interview with regard to Claim 1, Applicants respectively submit that Claim 1, independent Claim 11 having similar features, and the claims dependent therefrom patentably define over the applied prior art.


Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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